

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1153

To accelerate the wilderness designation process by establishing a timetable for the completion of wilderness studies on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 6, 2003

Mr. OTTER (for himself, Mr. CANNON, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. AKIN, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. HERGER, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. MCINNIS, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To accelerate the wilderness designation process by establishing a timetable for the completion of wilderness studies on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as “America’s Wilderness Pro-
5 tection Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The designation of certain Federal lands as
2 wilderness is beneficial to the American people.

3 (2) The Wilderness Act and the Federal Land
4 Policy and Management Act of 1976 provided for
5 the study of certain lands for wilderness suitability.
6 Areas undergoing such a study have been generally
7 known as “Wilderness Study Areas”.

8 (3) Wilderness Study Areas were intended to
9 have interim management status pending completion
10 of wilderness suitability studies. Wilderness Study
11 Area status was not intended as a substitute for wil-
12 derness designation by Congress.

13 (4) It was not the intent of Congress that areas
14 continue under Wilderness Study Area status indefi-
15 nitely. Perpetuation of Wilderness Study Area status
16 is undesirable and hinders the wilderness designation
17 process. Lands that merit wilderness designation
18 should be granted the full protection that such a sta-
19 tus would afford and those lands that do not merit
20 such a designation should be released so that they
21 can be managed for the public good as accorded by
22 law.

23 (5) The establishment of a timetable for the
24 completion of wilderness studies would facilitate the

1 wilderness designation process by supplying a time-
2 frame within which Congress must act.

3 **SEC. 3. TIMETABLE FOR WILDERNESS STUDY COMPLETION.**

4 (a) EXISTING WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.—All
5 areas with Wilderness Study Area status on the date of
6 the enactment of this Act shall be released from Wilder-
7 ness Study Area status on the earlier of the following:

8 (1) The date that the Secretary of the Interior
9 or the Secretary of Agriculture, as appropriate, de-
10 termines that the area is not suitable for wilderness
11 designation.

12 (2) 10 years after the date of the enactment of
13 this Act.

14 (3) The date that the area is designated as wil-
15 derness by an Act of Congress.

16 (b) SUBSEQUENT WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.—Any
17 area that is given Wilderness Study Area status after the
18 date of enactment of this Act shall be released from Wil-
19 derness Study Area status on the earlier of the following:

20 (1) The date that the Secretary of the Interior
21 or the Secretary of Agriculture, as appropriate, de-
22 termines that the area is not suitable for wilderness
23 designation.

24 (2) 10 years after the date that the area was
25 given Wilderness Study Area status.

1 (3) The date that the area is designated as wil-
2 derness by an Act of Congress.

3 (c) RELEASE FROM WILDERNESS STUDY AREA STA-
4 TUS.—Any area that is released from Wilderness Study
5 Area status pursuant to paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), (b)(1),
6 or (b)(2) shall revert to the land use status such area had
7 immediately before the area was given Wilderness Study
8 Area status and shall not be studied again regarding wil-
9 derness designation.

10 (d) WILDERNESS STUDY AREA.—For the purposes of
11 this section, the term “Wilderness Study Area” means any
12 Federal land officially referred to as a “wilderness study
13 area”, a “recommended wilderness”, a “proposed wilder-
14 ness”, or a “potential wilderness”, or any other Federal
15 land that is under study by, or on behalf of, the Federal
16 Government for possible designation as wilderness.

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